

The Congressman Takes a Bride

THEY were married in St. Louis, where would you spend your honeymoon? The clue is contained in the following squib on the social page of the Kanawha Valley Star (Catherine Bliss Enslow please copy):

"We announce today the marriage of our friend Mr. Jenkins, the Representative of this district in Congress, to Miss Bowlin of St. Louis. The happy and distinguished pair passed through this place on Thursday on their way to White Sulphur Springs, where they will spend the hot months of summer. We assure them of warm wishes for their happiness, which this event inspires. Indeed, if our warm wishes were blessings, and our bright hopes were flowers, both would fall thick on the pathway of life."

The year 1858 was jam-packed with important events. The first Atlantic cable was laid, and President Buchanan and Queen Victoria exchanged messages. A lawyer named Abraham Lincoln, in accepting the Republican nomination for the United States Senate in Illinois proclaimed: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe that government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free. It also was the year in which the Virginia state legislature re-named Marshall Academy as "Marshall College." There is no recorded evidence that liquor by the drink was debated in the 1858 state legislature.

For freshman Congressman Albert Gallatin Jenkins, 1858 was also one of the most important years in his life. Congress adjourned on June 14. He hurried westward to St. Louis and on July 15, 1858, he and Miss Virginia Southard Bowlin were married.

Miss Bowlin's father, James Butler Bowlin, was one of the leading citizens of Missouri. He had been a member of the state legislature, District Attorney of St. Louis, and judge of the Criminal Court prior to serving four terms in the House of Rep-

resentatives from 1843 to 1851. He then served in the ambassadorial posts as this nation's representative in Colombia and Paraguay. Perhaps young Jenkins' strange trip through Latin America after his graduation from Harvard Law School had some connection with the fact that Ambassador Bowlin had a most attractive daughter to whom the son of Greenbriar was deeply and personally attached.

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Back To Capital

Returning to Washington, D. C., for the second session of the 35th Congress, Representative Jenkins and his lovely bride cut a brilliant caper in capital society. Congress convened early in December, 1858, and Jenkins was soon back in his familiar role of taking part in the thick of debate. A quick thinker, a principled defender of states rights, and a dangerous man to tangle with in the rough-and-tumble of Congressional debate.

The Gentleman from Virginia made his first full-dress speech on Jan. 12, 1859. Congressman Jenkins, interrupting an almost incessant flow of oratory on the slavery question, chose foreign policy as his topic. He opened with an attack on the Republican Party for its cannonading at the South:

If the tariff is to be raised, these gentlemen of the Republican Party think the only way to enlighten themselves and the country preparatory to so doing, is by reading long essays against the institutions of their brethren of the South. If matters affecting our foreign inter-

ests are to be acted upon, they seem to think the only legitimate method of approaching the subject is through a speech denouncing the slave dignity. Like Mr. Sumner, who persisted in his spectacle of bleeding and warm water for all ailments, however different, so our political doctors of the Republican Party do so with anti-slavery speeches for all the ills that afflict the body politic. A remarkable point of similitude in the two cases is the pertinacity which each has displayed in adhering to their practice."

In appraising our policy in Latin America, Jenkins delivered a moving appeal in support of the Monroe Doctrine. In terms which would apply equally well in 1961, Jenkins urged that America take more active steps to bar foreign nations from their inroads into the western hemisphere. He noted that the state of Virginia was erecting a statue to the memory of James Monroe, and he urged instead that Monroe be honored by a stronger American foreign policy. Jenkins urged that honor be paid to Monroe "not by developing in

the marble its latent forms of beauty. But let us do it by incorporating into our foreign policy, as a fundamental principle, the doctrine already consecrated by his name. Sir, let this Administration commit itself at once and unreservedly to the Monroe Doctrine. And, sir, let it enforce it. Let it do this, and it may proclaim to the world, not in the spirit of classic fancy and poetic license, but in the language of soberness and truth:

"Exergi monumentum, oere perennium" ("I have built a monument more enduring than brass.")"

Effect Electric

The effect of Congressman Jenkins's brilliant address was electric. The Washington Statesman commented editorially on Jan. 14, 1859: "We accept it as a good omen for the country that Congress is beginning to bestow attention on the external relations of the gov-

ernment." The editorial praised the "firm and fearless temper exhibited in the House of Representatives. The speech of Mr. Jenkins especially is a most opportune vindication of American policy, and we cannot doubt that it will contribute no less to the public interest by its expression of patriotic spirit than to his personal reputation by its display of ability."

The Kanawha Valley Star in Charleston carried Congressman Jenkins's speech in full on the front page of its Feb. 1, 1859 issue, noting: "It is a speech highly creditable to our young and talented Representative and will, no doubt, be read with pride and gratification by his constituents."

As the slush of winter melted from Washington's streets and was succeeded by the mud of early spring, Congressman Jenkins suddenly realized that he was faced by that two-year threat which confronts every Member of the House of Representatives: the campaign. He started to collect his forces for the fourth Thursday in May of 1859: Election Day for Congressmen.

(To be Continued)